CLAIMS

We claim:

1.   A pet food product comprising: N pieces wherein N pieces provide
      the complete daily nutritional requirements of an animal, and N
      equals 1 to less than 10 pieces.

2.   The pet food product of claim 1, wherein N pieces provide the
      complete and balanced daily nutritional requirements of an animal.

3.   The pet food product of claim 1, wherein each of the N pieces has
      an inner component having a hardness value in the range of 50 to
      2760 Max Force and an outer component having a hardness value
      in the range of 50 to 300 Max Force.

4.   The pet food product of claim 1, wherein each of the N pieces has
      a brittleness value in the range of 430 to 1160 mm, a toughness
      value in the range of 0.5 to 5.5 Work and a hardness value in the
      range of 70 to 520 Max Force.

5.   The pet food product of claim 1, wherein each of the N pieces has
      about 1.4 to 8.4 Kcalories per gram, a caloric density of about 1.8
      to 11.1 Kcal/cm^3 and a caloric content between 20 to 2500 calories
      per piece.

6.   The pet food product of claim 1, wherein each piece is comprised
      of two components, an outer component and an inner component.

7.   The pet food product of claim 6, wherein the inner and outer
      component have a different quality selected from the group
      consisting of hardness, brittleness, toughness, density, caloric
      density, calories per gram and color.

8.   The pet food of claim 6, wherein the inner component comprises
      10 to 90% of the product.

9. The pet food product of claim 1, wherein the product has a protein content in the range of 18 to 65 wt%, a carbohydrate content in the range of 30 to 70 wt%, a fat content in the range of 3 to 20 wt% and a fiber content in the range of 0 to 10 wt%.

10. The pet food product of claim 1, wherein the product has a water activity of less than 0.9.

11. The pet food product of claim 1, wherein the product is a single component.

12. The pet food product of claim 1, wherein the pet food product is configured such that the animal can hold the product with its appendages while eating the product..

13. The pet food product of claim 1, wherein the product has a longitudinal shape and a cross sectional shape in the form of a modified triangle having a length greater than 0.75 cm and a cross sectional area in the range of 3.0 to 18.0 cm^2.

14. The pet food product of claim 1, wherein the product has a weight in the range of 20 to 400 grams.

15. The pet food product of claim 1, wherein each piece is cohesive.

16. The pet food product of claim 1, wherein N is 1, 2 or 3.

17. The pet food product of claim 1, wherein an N piece has a consumption time of five to sixty minutes.

18. A pet food product comprising an inner component having a hardness value in the range of 50 to 2760 Max Force, an outer component having a hardness value in the range of 50 to 300 Max Force and a caloric density of about 1.8 to 11.1 $Kcal/m^3$, wherein the pet food product is a nutritionally complete meal.

19. The pet food product of claim 18, wherein the product has a brittleness in the range of 430 to 1160 mm, a toughness in the range of 0.5 to 5.5 Work and a density in the range of 0.6 to 1.7 g/cm^3.

20. A method of feeding an animal comprising the step of feeding an animal N pieces of a pet food product wherein N equals 1 to 15 in which N pieces provide the complete daily nutritional requirements of the animal.

21. The method of claim 20, wherein N is dependent upon the weight of the animal.

22. The method of claim 20, wherein the pet food product is configured such that the animal can hold the product with its appendages while eating the product.

23. A pet food product comprising a nutritional complete meal having a 'well-being' score of at least 3.2.

24. The pet food product of claim 23, wherein the complete meal has an 'occupation' and/or 'chewing satisfaction' score of at least 3.3, a 'convenience' and/or 'messiness' score of at least 3.4 and a 'texture' score of at least 3.

25. A method of feeding an animal comprising the step of feeding an animal a pet food product comprising a nutritionally complete meal having a 'well-being' score of at least 3.2, wherein the pet food product has a length greater than 0.75 cm and a cross sectional area in the range of 3.0 to 13.0 cm^2.

26. A pet food product manufactured by the method of:
   a. blending and batching selected ingredients;
   b. processing the ingredients through at least one extruder;
   c. moving the extrudate through a die head;

wherein said product comprises N pieces wherein N pieces provide the complete daily nutritional requirements of an animal, and N equals 1 to 15 pieces.

27. A method of feeding an animal comprising the step of feeding a preferred pet food product to the animal, wherein the pet food product is a nutritionally complete meal and is configured such that the animal can hold the product with its appendages while eating the product.

28. The method of claim 27, wherein the pet food product is preferred by 60% of dogs over a standard dry kibble pet food.

29. The method of claim 27, wherein the pet food product comprises a nutritionally complete meal having a 'well-being' score of at least 3.2.

30. The method of claim of 27, wherein the pet food product comprises N pieces wherein N pieces provide the complete daily nutritional requirements of an animal, and N equals 1 to 15 pieces.